

# city of milwaukee health department

## safe sleep brief

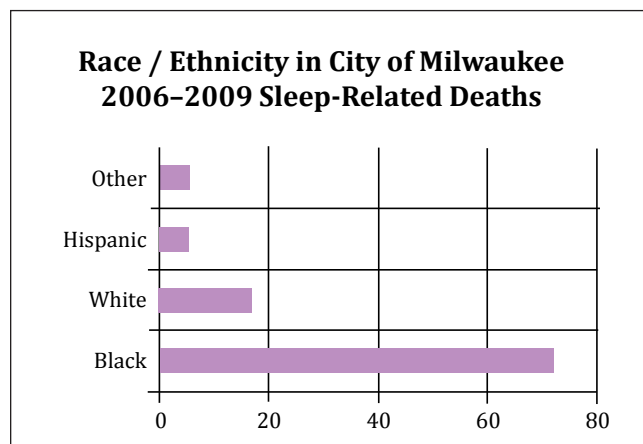
The City of Milwaukee Fetal/Infant Mortality Review (FIMR) program has reviewed the data from the deaths of the 89 infants who died during their sleep in the first year of life between 2006 and 2009.

Of these, only 1% were true Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) deaths, where no unsafe sleep risk factors were present at the time of death. 25% of the deaths were classified as positional or mechanical suffocation, overlay or as undetermined. The remaining 74% of these deaths were classified as Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) with one or multiple risk factors present. Most of these deaths could have been prevented. This brief presents key points regarding the risk factors surrounding all 89 sleep-related deaths in this four-year time period.

### about the babies and their mothers

- African Americans carry an unfair burden of safe sleep related infant death. In 2006-2009, 47.4% of Milwaukee births were to African American mothers, yet African American infants represent 72% of all sleep-related deaths. (Figure 1)
- 74% of the mothers of these infants were age 20 or older.
- In more than one-third of all infant sleep related deaths, the infant was put to sleep by someone other than the mother of the baby.

Figure 1



### smoking and infant death

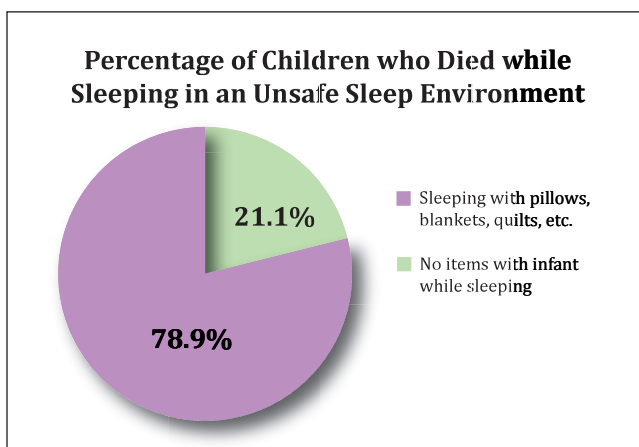
- 13% of City of Milwaukee births were to mothers who smoked during pregnancy, yet 51% of infants who died in their sleep had mothers who smoked during pregnancy.
- 69% of infants who died in their sleep were exposed to secondhand smoke.

### unsafe sleep risk factors

#### Use of pillows, blankets, quilts, bumper pads

79% of the 89 sleep-related deaths from 2006-2009 had documented use of pillows, blankets, quilts, or bumper pads in the sleep area.

Figure 2

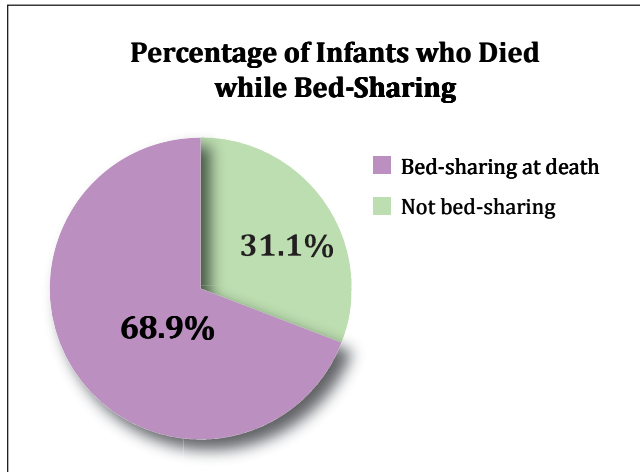


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## Bed-sharing

69% of all 2006-2009 sleep related deaths involved bed-sharing with adults or siblings.

Figure 3



## other unsafe sleep risk factors

### Prone or side sleep position

37% of these infants were on their stomachs or their sides when placed to sleep.

### Sleeping on surfaces not intended for sleep

22% of these 89 infants were placed to sleep on a couch, on a chair, in a carseat or a swing.

### Caregiver use of alcohol or drugs

18% of the adults taking care of these infants when they died were impaired by alcohol or drugs.

### Prematurity

20-30% of all babies who died in unsafe sleep were born prematurely. Special care needs to be taken of these infants.

## recommendations

The City of Milwaukee Health Department makes the following recommendations:

- Share a room with your baby, not a bed. One study showed that babies who sleep in an adult bed have a 20 times higher risk of SIDS than babies who sleep alone in a crib.
- Use a crib, bassinette or Pack 'n Play™. It should not have pillows, blankets, quilts, top sheets, bumper pads, mobiles or toys in it.
- Do not expose a baby to secondhand smoke, including marijuana. Prenatal smoking may cause up to one third of SIDS deaths.
- Only place a baby on his or her back to sleep.
- Never let a baby sleep on a couch, chair, or in a bouncy seat.
- Avoid overheating—keep room temperature comfortable, and do not over-dress the baby.
- Do not drink or take drugs when you are caring for a baby.
- Give specific infant sleep instructions to anyone who will be caring for your baby.

***Remember that the safest place for a baby to sleep is on his or her back in an otherwise empty crib, bassinette, or Pack 'n Play™, next to the parents' bed.***

*For more information about how you can become involved, call 414-286-6636.*